



## Anxious to show off the beauty of Arkansas

I recently received an e-mail from a man in Malvern that made my day. He wrote: "My wife and I took a mission trip to 17 states and were shocked to see the condition of some of the state parks. Most of these state parks offer primitive camping only. Arkansas has the best state parks we have ever seen. We really have something to be proud of, and I'm telling everyone. You guys are to be congratulated. Nice job from a proud Arkansan."

You can see why I was smiling after reading that e-mail. We've made tremendous investments in our state the past several years, and we're beginning to see the results of those investments. When I say "we," I'm not talking about state government officials. I'm talking about you -- the citizens of Arkansas. After all, the voters were the ones who in November 1996 approved Amendment 75 to the Arkansas Constitution. This amendment dedicates one-eighth of a cent of the state sales tax to our state parks, Game and Fish Commission facilities, the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission and the Department of Arkansas Heritage museums and programs. It's providing millions of dollars each year that we're investing wisely to keep the Natural State beautiful. It's the reason we now have the finest system of state parks in the country. Arkansas



*One of the state's most spectacular sights, Cedar Falls, is a beautiful end to a 2-mile hike from Mather Lodge at Petit Jean State Park.*

voters also were the ones who in June 1999 approved a bond issue that has allowed us to spend \$1 billion the past five years transforming one of the worst systems of interstate highways in the country into one of the best. And Arkansas voters were the ones who in November 2000 decided to devote all of the money from the tobacco lawsuit settlement to programs designed to improve the health of Arkansans. These were all smart investments that show the people of Arkansas have a vision for what this state can be.

I'm anxious to show off our smooth roads, our wonderful state parks, our state-of-the-art nature centers

and more. That's why I signed an executive order that directs state agencies, boards and commissions to implement plans to recruit organizations to hold conventions in Arkansas. Every entity in state government will have to deliver plans to the state Department of Parks and Tourism, which will coordinate this effort. The plans will be due May 1 each year. Reports must include a list of

*Gov. Mike Huckabee held a news conference at the state Capitol to talk about an executive order directing all state agencies, boards and commissions to invite the national and regional conferences of organizations to which they belong.*

the national and regional organizations to which dues are paid along with a detailed report on the status of negotiations or contacts with these organizations regarding conferences and conventions. The Parks and Tourism Department has set aside a section of its website that employees of various state agencies can use to comply with the executive order. We're not trying to add work for state employees. We're trying to bring out-of-state visitors and their wallets to Arkansas.

We pay dues to hundreds of organizations. We should be working to bring those groups' meetings to the state. Conferences happen all over the country every day of the year. We're now doing our best to ensure more of them occur in Arkansas. In the governor's office, we're practicing what we preach. In April, for example, the Education Commission of the States held a meeting in Little Rock. I'm the chairman of this group, and this meeting brought almost 100 education leaders from across the country to our state. This fall, the Delta Regional Authority will hold its annual meeting in Little Rock. I'm the former state co-chairman of the DRA, and I was determined to land the meeting for Arkansas. Almost 400 people are expected in Little Rock for the DRA's

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# Spreading the word about Arkansas' automotive corridor

I was recently in Detroit for the annual meeting of the Society of Automotive Engineers. The organization has almost 90,000 members, and its annual meeting is a huge one. This was the first year for Arkansas to have an exhibit at a Society of Automotive Engineers meeting, and I wanted to be there to promote the rapidly expanding automotive corridor in east Arkansas. It would be an understatement to say I was encouraged by the reaction of auto-related companies to our pitch. The response was outstanding. Arkansas is on the map for companies in the automotive sector. And rest assured that our efforts aren't limited to the growing east Arkansas corridor. There are locations statewide that could accommodate auto-related manufacturing facilities.

There already are about 100 companies in the state that manufacture automotive products, and the number is growing. In our east Arkansas corridor, construction is moving ahead on the Hino Motors facility at Marion. Hino is an industry leader in Japan and has held the top position for medium and heavy-duty diesel trucks in the Japanese market for three decades. Another Japanese company known as Denso opened a plant in Osceola last year. Denso officials are pleased with the results thus far and

anticipate a workforce of 500 people by 2008. Adjacent to the Denso plant will be a facility for Systex Products that will employ 40 people. In Wynne, meanwhile, Eakas Arkansas will begin production next year with about 75 employees. An eventual workforce of 250 people is anticipated. Construction is now beginning on the 109,000-square-foot plant. At Marked Tree, Mid-South Manufacturing will make a \$3 million investment and add 100 jobs, bringing Mid-South's workforce there to 450 people.

I traveled to Japan last year to visit companies that do business in our state. I'm planning to return this fall as we host what's being called the Arkansas Weekend at the World Expo. There are 125 countries participating in the World Expo, and an estimated 15 million people will attend the event. We want to stand out as a state seeking to further its global economic opportu-



Gov. Mike Huckabee spoke at the Arkansas exhibit at the Society of Automotive Engineers annual meeting in Detroit. At the meeting, he met with various companies about the east Arkansas automotive

nities. Last November, 64 percent of Arkansas voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing the Legislature to issue general revenue bonds to fund infrastructure projects that create at least 500 jobs and invest at least \$500 million in our state. This gives us a tool to compete for large projects such as auto assembly plants. I'm committed to being aggressive in marketing our central location, dedicated workforce, incredi-

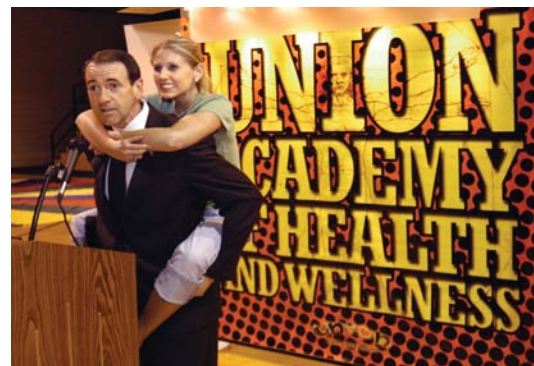
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## Setting a great example for Arkansas schools

One of the best days I've had recently came during a visit to the El Dorado School District and its Union Academy of Health and Wellness. The El Dorado School District is among the most innovative districts in the state with its health and fitness-related equipment and technology. A rock-climbing wall had been installed in the gym, and children were jumping on exercise balls, participating in aerobic activities, practicing gymnastics and playing hopscotch. In the weight room, other students were learning to use modern training equipment.

I hope more school districts will follow the example of El Dorado School District officials and place a focus on health and wellness. In fact, I would go as far as to tell administrators across the state they should visit the Union Academy of Health and Wellness and see the fitness center, the aerobic studio, the rock-climbing wall, the heart-rate monitors, the physical assessment system and the other things that make this school unique.

The school lists its mission as educating the whole person. Teachers try to prepare students for a mentally and physically healthy life with the ability to make informed choices. Students from kindergarten through the third grade learn about healthy eating habits. Students from the fourth grade through the sixth grade learn the benefits of becoming active. And junior high students learn about the body and become experts on the body mass index.



(above) Gov. Mike Huckabee gives a demonstration of what it was like before he lost almost 110 pounds. He gave student Julie Nolan, who weighs about what he has lost, a ride on his back.



(left) Students from the El Dorado School District scale a rock-climbing wall in the gym.



# Dr. Fay Boozman helped make Arkansas healthier



Gov. Mike Huckabee and Fay Boozman looked at some of the healthy options available at Sufficient Grounds in downtown Little Rock.

The day Dr. Fay Boozman became director of the state Department of Health was one of my happiest days as governor. The day he lost his life was the saddest. Much has been written about Fay since his death on that farm near Rogers, but I would like to add a bit of personal perspective. Fay was not only a member of my Cabinet, he was also a close friend and trusted adviser. Having had a successful medical career in northwest Arkansas, he became involved in politics during my first campaign in 1992. He was elected to the state Senate in 1994 and served honorably be-

fore deciding to seek a spot in the U.S. Senate in 1998. When that campaign was unsuccessful, I knew I wanted Fay on my team. He already had devoted a lifetime to making people healthier. As director of the Health Department, all 2.7 million Arkansans became his patients. Across the state, people learned what those in northwest Arkansas had long known -- Fay was one of the most caring people to ever live in Arkansas. Even in the sometimes brutal world of politics, he never lost the bedside manner that won him so many friends.

To quote from an editorial in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, "The over-used term public servant seems to apply less and less in this overheated time of 24/7 hype. Dr. Boozman, the genuine article, seemed allergic to the personal promotion and unceasing publicity that's considered a must for a political/theatrical career. There was something almost shy about him for a figure who became so familiar in the news. Even when he was in the spotlight, he seemed in the background -- supporting rather than starring in the production. No wonder he never scaled the heights of American politics. For someone who aspired to his kind of service, it might have been a step down.

It was always such a pleasure -- and relief -- to see Fay and Vickey Boozman approach."

Fay, a Fort Smith native, loved this state and its people. He especially loved the children. Fighting the childhood obesity epidemic was much more than a job for this devout Christian gentleman. He considered it a part of his mission on this Earth. We were fortunate to have had Fay serving us. As we expand the Healthy Arkansas initiative, I'll think of Fay each day and strive to keep plugging in his memory.



The childhood obesity team from Star City High School - Ashley Dreher, Mary Gateley, Heather Halbrook, Megan Henley and Aaron Keahey - came together in an effort to reduce the body-mass index numbers for students.

## Automotive corridor

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ble transportation systems and available infrastructure funds. Though we didn't land that Toyota truck manufacturing plant for Marion, the fact we finished a strong runner-up to San Antonio got us noticed. Newspaper columnist David Sanders recently wrote about our state's chances of landing an automobile assembly plant. He interviewed Greg Kaza, the executive director of the Arkansas Policy Foundation and a former Michigan state legislator with ties to the auto industry. Kaza said, "It isn't a question of if Arkansas will receive an auto plant. It's a question of when."

Toyota officials have said they're likely to announce a site for the company's seventh North

American assembly plant by the end of next year. An eighth plant could be added by 2010 as Toyota attempts to overtake General Motors as the world's largest auto manufacturer.

Other foreign firms are expected to locate plants in the South. Michael Robinet, a vice president at the auto consulting firm CSM Worldwide, told the Detroit News that Arkansas would probably get the next auto manufacturing plant built in this country. While I appreciate his confidence, I cannot talk publicly about our negotiations with any companies. I can, however, reiterate that we're being more aggressive than ever before. With the passage of the constitutional amendment, we're in a stronger position than when we finished as runner-up for the last Toyota plant. I signed a bill into law this year

that includes a range of economic incentives for new businesses to locate in our state. We have the tools needed to compete with anyone. I'm convinced there are exciting days ahead for our state.



Gov. Mike Huckabee listens as Jasmine Glason, a first-grade student at Woodruff Elementary School in Little Rock, explains her latest art project. Huckabee and members of the Governor's Commission on the Arts in Education toured the school.

**Let us  
hear  
from  
you**

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## Arkansas beauty

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annual meeting, which was held last year in New Orleans. State agencies are getting in on the act. The Workers' Compensation Commission landed the annual convention of the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions for next year. More than 300 people will attend that meeting. Meanwhile, the Department of Arkansas Heritage landed the Mid-America Arts Alliance conference for next year. This convention will bring between 800 and 1,000 people to Arkansas.

I attend a lot of meetings. It occurred to me that Arkansas is a better place for such gatherings than most of the places to which I travel. We have great convention facilities in Hot Springs, Fort Smith, Pine Bluff, Eureka Springs, Little Rock, Springdale, Fayetteville, Rogers, Jonesboro and elsewhere. We have less traffic, better scenery and unsurpassed hospitality. One of the things our research has shown is that people across the country don't know much about Arkansas. But once we get them here that first time, they tend to return. Often when they return, they bring their families along and spend lots of money.



*Petit Jean State Park overlooks Cedar Creek Canyon on Petit Jean Mountain.*

Travelers to Arkansas provided us with almost \$238 million in tax revenues last year. An additional \$89 million in local taxes resulted from their purchases. More than 59,000 Arkansans are directly employed by the travel industry, account-

ing for a payroll of more than \$940 million. Tourism adds to our economic base, provides positive publicity for the state and can lead to retirees moving here with their talents, time and trust funds.

## Governor Mike Huckabee

### *Capitol Views*

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